MAX
COMICS
APACHE SKIES
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT
CONTENT
DIRECT EDITION
00411
$2.99 US $4.75 CAN
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#4 OF 4

CHAPTER 4

STRAIGHT TO HELL!

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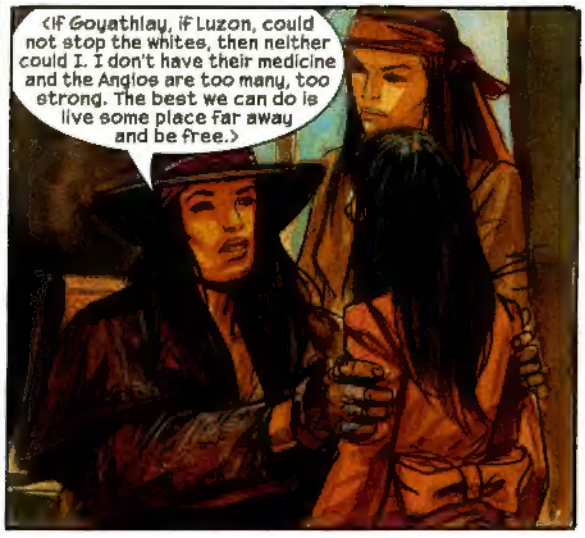
You unprincipled *brigand!* You interfere with *God's work!* Do you hear?! *God's work!*
Heard too damn much. Expect God has as well. Can't speak for *Him* but *I've* had enough.
No! Please! Don't kill me!
Not planning to kill you, Reverend.
Not planning to travel with you any further, either.
YAAAAH!

You devil! I'll see you in hell!
Expect you will.
I'm going forward to check on Eustace, Rosa. You see to the children, alright?
<Rosa, where do we go now? Are we going back to our parents?>
<No, Migdalia. Your parents asked me to take you up into the mountains where the Naze lived, keep you free, teach you the old ways, until maybe later they can join you again.>
<After you left us, the Anglos found us. They made Goyathlay surrender. I was very angry with you. I thought that if you had not gone, this would not have happened.>
<Why did you leave us, Rosa? Why did you leave me? Was it so important?>
<I... I thought so, Migdalia...>


<If Goyathlay, if Luzon, could not stop the whites, then neither could I. I don't have their medicine and the Anglos are too many, too strong. The best we can do is live some place far away and be free.>

<I swear this to you, Migdalia. I will never leave you or the other children again. I will be mother and father to you all. And I will teach you what it means to be of the People.>
<Or I will die.>

Looks like we got clear of 'em, Johnny.
For now. Seems you got clipped a bit. Let me look at it, Eustace.

Just a scratch. I can still drive this engine where we're going -- if you think that miner's camp and the spur line to it are still right.
Was when I rode by it last year.

That posse gave up pretty easy, don't you think?

I know Trask. He doesn't give up. Also doesn't waste time chasing a train that's pulled away from him.
My bet's he went to town looking for a train of his own.

Old man Tyler's still in town collecting his dead boy. Figure Trask will get the use of *his* train?
Be my bet.
Son, I've got to tell you-- Tyler's train is newer and top of the line. Got to be faster than this old girl.
We got maybe an hour to an hour and a half head start tops. All sort of tricks we can play that'll delay 'em, but the hard fact is that, sooner or later, they're going to catch up to us.
I know. Question is *where.*
I know these men. So long as Rosa and me are alive, they won't quit. And those kids won't have a ghost of a chance. Unless the matter is ***decided,*** once and for all, out where no one sees.
You got a *plan,* don't you, Johnny?
Usually. Try to have more than one in case the first one comes up bust.
Now let's get up a full head of steam on this old girl. We got some travelling to do.

What's the holdup? Thought we were in a hurry to get goin'.
All I know is this preacher comes flappin' down the rails, demanding to see Mr. Tyler. He's in there right now with Tyler and the Colonel.
And what is it you *want* of me, Reverend Phillips?
Why, to go *after* these renegades, sir! And bring me along!
Punishing those sinners is important, but getting the children back *safely*, of course, *must* be our first priority!
That how *you* see it, Colonel Trask?
First job's to kill Rawhide and the girl. Beyond that--well, I know a man'll pay a good bounty for those children's *scalps*.
What?! That's *barbaric*, sir! That's *obscene!* I *demand* you give me the name of the man that would do such an odious thing!
BLAM!

That would be me.
Best to kill vermin when they are small, you see, before they grow into larger problems.
We'll say we found Phillips' body just off the tracks. Obviously, this Rawhide Kid and his whore killed him. A terrible thing -- and Phillips a man of the cloth.
Let's get moving. I don't want those two escaping us now!
They won't. I know Johnny Bart. He won't let go of the kids and they'll slow him down.
We'll catch them, and then they'll all die.
Our train pounded away, mile after mile. Rosa and the Rawhide Kid shot out the telegraph lines at intervals so they couldn't be repaired and a warning sent on ahead.
The Rawhide Kid used chain to mangle switches and pull up track but he knew our pursuers had the men to fix them quickly. So we kept running, all that day and into the night, taking a spur up into the Apache Mountains.
We could feel them getting closer. It felt like death was approaching. And no one outruns their own death.

We stopped at an abandoned miner's camp up in the Apache Mountains. Rosa argued about taking the time but the Rawhide Kid insisted. We scoured the camp and found some coal oil and a keg of gunpowder.
Alright, kids - we're good. Back on the train.
We then ran up as far as we could -- maybe another hour. A deep gorge was spanned by a shaky wooden bridge and, on the other side, Rawhide Kid stopped the train again -- one last time - and spread the coal oil on the timbers behind us.
The gunpowder -- are you going to set that as well?
Not enough to do real damage. I got other plans for that keg
FWEEEET!
Whatever that plan is, you'd best be ready to make it work
Here they come!

Get on the train
KREEEHH
Why you slowing us down, engineer?
That bridge is old, rickety, and on fire, Colonel Trask! I a.n't riskin' my train on that!
Come on, Johnnybart!
Not your train
KPOW
And I don't need you to run it.
CHUFF! CHUFF!

End of the line, Johnnybart. Tracks end up ahead and the others aren't stopping
Didn't think they would. Wanted to create some smoke and confusion. You and Eustace come with me. Time for the final stage of my plan.
We uncouple the last car. Eustace, have the engine give us a push back down the track I'll ride 'er and stuff the gunpowder keg down their smokestack
I miss for any reason, then you open the throttle send our whole train back down-- ram them sumbitches. Knock 'em over the side
Have you gone *mad*?! This is *suicide*, Johnnybart!
Long odds, but not suicide.
Told you before-- if the time came to risk my life or give it, I'd do it... for the right reason. This is the time. Those kids are a right reason. You take care of 'em, Rosa.
Another time... another place, Johnnybart, and I... we... might.
We had what we had. Good enough for me

I get away from this, I won't join you. Some of Tyler's people may still be looking for us I'l lead em away towards Mexico
You need help, get up to Montana and a town called *Wonderment* Ask after Reno Jones Mention my name. They'll do right by you
Son, I don t know if you're a fool, crazy, or a damn hero -- but I've been proud to know you!
Just trying to do right as I see it, Eustace. Same as I always done. Let's get this rig rolling.
"Got a hard ride into hell a-coming."
Kill 'em *all*, boys, when we catch 'em! You hear?! No one gets out alive!
What th' hell is *that*?!
CLACK-KLI-KLASK

TRASK!
You owe me some lives!
I've come to collect!
PAW
PAW
PAW
POW!

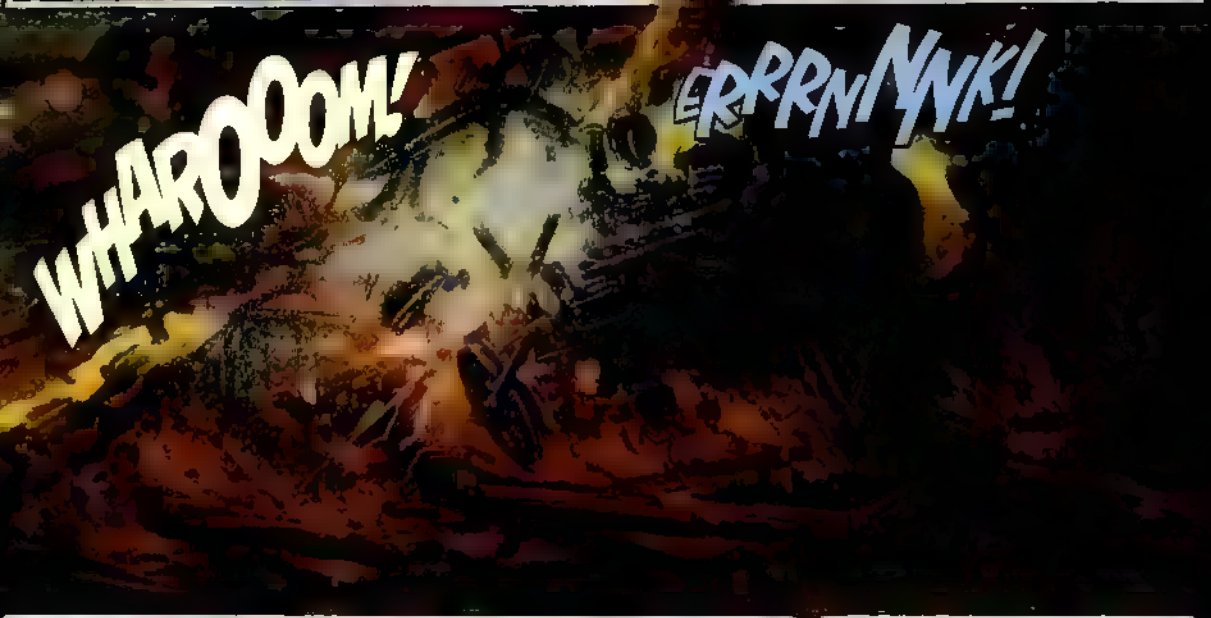
Damn! I can't see through the smoke!
Daz... beloved guide my hand! Help our friend! I beg you!

KRESHHHHH!

Goddamn crazy fool!!!
FOOM!
Colonel! He's still alive! But I got him!
Words aren't deeds.
BLAM!
Closing time, Johnny.

Not quite
WHAM!
See you in hell, Colonel
Save me a seat, boy.
RUMMMBLLLE
What the --?!

BLAM-DOOM!


WHAROOOM!
ERRRNNNK!

BDOW!
PKOW!

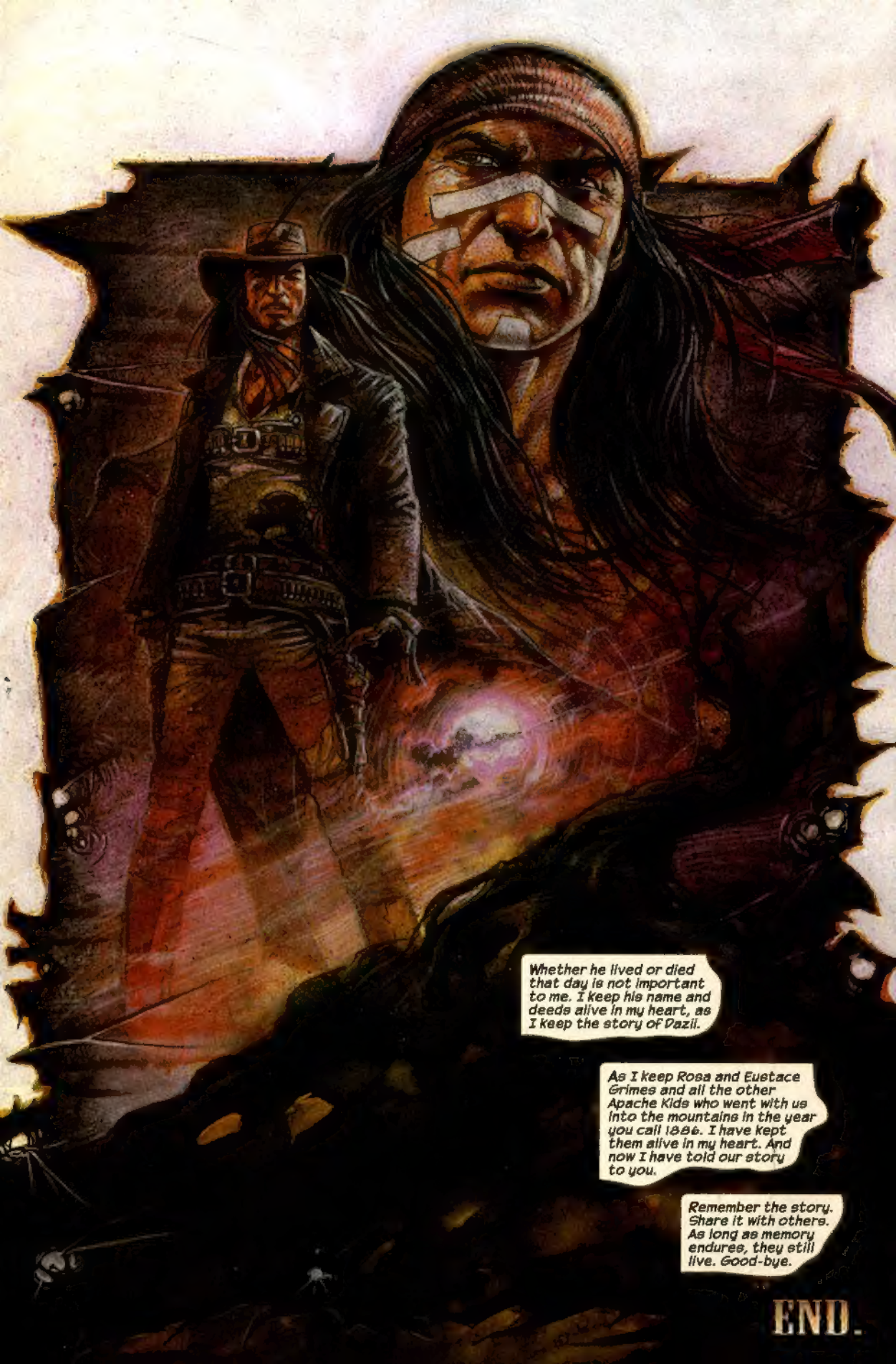
DAMN!

KRESHHH!
NOOOO!
Billy!

ERRRNNK!
ERNNNNNK!
KRESHHHH!
<Did he get away, Rosa?>
Damn smoke! Can't see a thing!
There.

For a moment, the smoke eddied and parted, like a curtain. On the other side of the gorge, we saw a figure. He seemed as if he were made of smoke himself.
He looked at us for a long time. There was a desire to be with us in his eyes, but a restlessness also.

The winds shifted. The smoke eddied again. The curtain closed.
When the smoke parted again, he was not there. I could not tell you if it was a man or ghost that I saw.
Later, we climbed down into the gorge and made sure that none of those who followed us were still alive. There we found Tyler's journal amidst the wreckage.
That is how I know what he said and did with Colonel Trask. And of how the Reverend Phillips died.
The rest I know from what Rosa or Eustace Grimes told me, or from my own eyes.
My name is Migdalia, in the language of the Mexicans. Long Memory in the language of my people.
Johnnybart, the Rawhide Kid, I never saw again. We heard stories of him later so perhaps he did live. But I never saw him again.


Whether he lived or died that day is not important to me. I keep his name and deeds alive in my heart, as I keep the story of Dazii.
As I keep Rosa and Eustace Grimes and all the other Apache Kids who went with us into the mountains in the year you call 1886. I have kept them alive in my heart. And now I have told our story to you.
Remember the story. Share it with others. As long as memory endures, they still live. Good-bye.
END.

ghoul